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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
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SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 000314

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [IN](#) [CG](#)
SUBJECT: A CONVERSATION WITH GENERAL JOHN NUMBI

REF: KINSHASA 254 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador William J. Garvelink for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: On the evening of March 31, Ambassador Garvelink met with General John Numbi and discussed a range of issues. Topics included the GDRG-GOR joint operations in North Kivu, the demise of the CNDP, MONUC, the resignation of Vital Kamerhe as President of the National Assembly, and his (Numbi,s) search for funding for police training and assistance in dealing with drug traffickers using the Congo as a transit point. End Summary.

¶2. (C) General Numbi considered the joint military operation with Rwanda against the FDLR to be a great success. The FDLR has been seriously damaged in his view. The FDLR,s headquarters has been destroyed and the FDLR forces in North Kivu have been separated from their economic assets. Numbi said they no longer have access to agricultural production or gold and other minerals which funded their operations. He expressed concern for the local population in North Kivu and the possible reprisals by the FDLR in the near term. He confidently predicted that in three to four months the FARDC now with CNDP soldiers and supported by MONUC would eliminate the FDLR from North Kivu. He explained that he is transferring police units into North Kivu to replace FARDC forces which are beginning to move into South Kivu. He said planning for operations in South Kivu is underway but did not elaborate. He noted that the reason he ran the operation in North Kivu was because he spoke Swahili and General Etumba did not. One suspects that his relationship with President Kabila and with the Rwandans had more to do with his selection than his language capabilities. General Numbi lauded the joint operation with Rwanda because it went a long way in breaking down longstanding distrust between the leadership of the two countries and in building a cooperative relationship between the two nations. General Numbi asked the U.S. to continue to urge President Kabila to continue his regular dialogue with President Kagame.

¶3. (C) General Numbi stated the CNDP was finished as a military organization and that it would not be able to resurrect itself because of the loss of Rwandan support. The logistical supply line through Rwanda was critically important to the CNDP and now that has ended. Numbi said that in the past whenever the CNDP felt trapped or that support from Rwanda was failing they would claim that they were about to be attacked by joint FDLR-FARDC forces. Numbi speculated that there may have been some interaction between some field commanders of the FARDC with the FDLR but never to the extent claimed by Nkunda and the CNDP. Numbi said he expected Nkunda to be returned to the Congo but he would not speculate as to the timing.

¶4. (C) General Numbi became very animated while he discussed MONUC. He said his working relationship with SRSR Doss and MONUC Force Commander Gaye has been excellent

but that the units in the field are passive and ineffective. He pointed to the Indians, in particular. Ambassador Garvelink noted that it is important to the U.S. and the international community that Indian forces remain in the Congo and that it would be a crippling blow to MONUC if the Indians withdrew (reftel). The Indians provide forces on the ground that are important to civilian protection and supply most of the helicopters MONUC has. Without the Indians, the logistical support that MONUC provides to the FARDC would evaporate and that would severely limit the FARDC ability to move around the eastern Congo. Regardless of what he thought of their offensive capabilities, the Indians were essential to MONUC and to FARDC operations. Numbi acknowledged the points. Comment: Numbi is clearly one of the individuals around President Kabila who sees little value in MONUC as a military force. End comment.

15. (C) Ambassador noted that the political feud between President Kabila and Vital Kamerhe, ending with Kamerhe,s resignation as President of the National Assembly but remaining as a Deputy in the National Assembly, appeared to be a satisfactory outcome for both sides. Numbi expressed his dismay with the behavior of Kamerhe regarding the operation with Rwanda and was surprised by Kamerhe,s claim that he was not aware of the plans and decisions. Numbi said that he had kept Kamerhe and Kengo, President of the Senate, informed of the discussions with Rwanda and the military plans.

16. (C) At the conclusion of the meeting, General Numbi mentioned his search for funding for police training. He noted that the secret to lasting peace in the eastern Congo is an adequately trained and equipped police force. He also said that he needed training for his officers who were dealing with drug traffickers who use the Congo as a transit point. His police have very little experience in dealing with this kind of criminal behavior.

17. (C) Comment: General Numbi was in fine form. He was relaxed and talkative. He arrived at the meeting alone, driving his own vehicle. He was in civilian clothes. He appears to be interested in reestablishing his relationship with the embassy, a relationship that had lapsed for several years. He has a reputation as one of the Katangan hardliners around President Kabila and as a ruthless military officer, now head of the national police. Nevertheless, it is important to know what he is thinking and saying to President Kabila and for him to hear United States, interests and concerns. We are particularly pleased to have had the opportunity to discuss our views on the importance of India,s presence in MONUC. Numbi clearly does not like the Indians and for that reason alone he needed to know that the U.S. has confidence in them. We continue to engage with Numbi, who could come to assume even greater responsibilities during the latter half of Kabila term as president. End comment.

GARVELINK